

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

12-73

Orleans

EAS.1261

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 30 Chipman Street

Historic Name: John and Constance Cunningham House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1965

Source: Deed research, USGS aerial survey

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Unknown/ Joseph R. Whiting (possibly)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

New windows, remove front dormer (post-2009)

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.32 acres

Setting: This house is located within a mid-20th century subdivision just north of the Eastham Elementary School campus. A clamshell driveway leads to the east side of the house. The house is centered on its small lot and surrounded by lawn, with the perimeter of the parcel left in a natural state.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The John and Constance Cunningham House, built in ca. 1965, is a one-story cottage with high walls. The roof has an unusual roof form with a higher and lower hipped roofs. The house rests on a concrete block foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain corner boards. The high hip roofs are clad in asphalt shingles. There are no chimneys. As can be seen comparing the current photos with the 2009 Assessor photo (Photo 3), the building has since been altered with new window systems, and the unusual triangular dormer on the front roof slope has been removed. In addition, the front door with broad surround shown on the 2009 photo has been replaced with the current door set in a narrow frame and shielded by a shed-roofed porch supported by narrow posts.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

This property is located just north of the Old Town Center National Register District. The house has an Assessor date of 1910, but that is not accurate. Neither this house nor Chipman Street are shown on the 1910 Barnstable County Atlas (Figure 2). This parcel was identified as Lot 34, Section I on a subdivision plan filed by the Eastham Land Company (Figure 3).¹ The plan is dated 1936 but is annotated to say that it was compiled from the "original plan of Section 1 of the Eastham Land Company" dated 1873. Like many developers in Eastham, Eastham Land Company's efforts were probably stimulated by the arrival of the Old Colony Railroad in Eastham in 1870. The company laid out ten subdivisions east of the rail tracks in 1873 and 1874, and at least three of them were later developed to some degree. While plans of all ten subdivisions are on file at the Barnstable County Registry, none of them refer to deeds that identify the founders of Eastham Land Company.²

Chipman Street is not shown on the 1938 United State Geological Survey (USGS) aerial survey, but it was in place by the time the 1952 USGS aerial survey was completed. The house, however, was still not in place (Photo 4). Title research for this house on Lot 34 traces back to 1942, when the Inhabitants of the Town of Eastham, pursuant to a February 1942 town vote, sold Lots 33-35, 45-49, 52, 54, 55, and 61 to Joseph Robert Whiting for the (unusual) sum of \$122.73. The reason for the odd and low purchase price is unclear. However, the sale was likely a consequence of the town acquiring these parcels through tax takings,

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 52/ Page 135.

² This information derived from the MHC Building Form for 705 Doane Road (EAS.216).

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possibly a direct or indirect result of the Great Depression. Joseph Robert Whiting (1908-1988) married Mildred F. Paine in Woods Hole in 1932. By 1940, they were living on Old Orchard Road in Eastham, and he was working as a laborer. By 1950, they were living near the subdivision at 280 Schoolhouse Road (EAS.1321), and he was listed as a house carpenter.

In 1960, the Whitings sold this Lot 34 to John A. and Constance L. Cunningham of Eastham.³ That same deed also included a 15-acre parcel of land east of School House Road. Joseph Whiting may have been responsible for building this house before selling it (although the 1960 deed does not reference buildings), or he may have built it for the Cunninghams after they purchased the lot.

In 1965, the Cunninghams sold this property to Vito C. and Edythe E. Trautz of Eastham.⁴ They, in turn, sold the property in 1977 to Arthur P. and Ann Messier of Eastham.⁵ While not conclusive, this was the first deed to reference a building, so it is possible this house was not built until sometime between 1965 and 1971 (when it appears on the 1971 USGS aerial survey). In 1999, Ann Messier sold this property to Kevin N. Eastman of Dennis and Dorothy E. Agger-Gusta of Hampton, MA.⁶ Kevin Eastman retains ownership of this property.

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³ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 1097/ Page 147.

⁴ Book 1302/ Page 1047.

⁵ Book 2525/ Page 88.

⁶ Book 12368/ Page 65.

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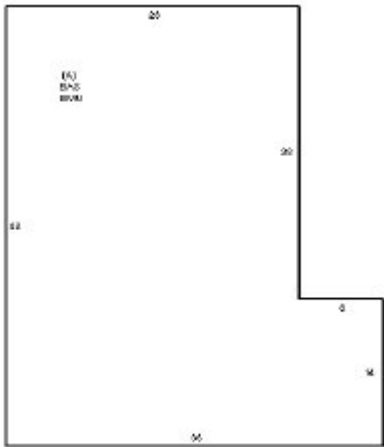


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Chipman Street, looking northwest.



Photo 3. 2009 Assessor photo.

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Figure 2. Detail of 1910 Barnstable County Atlas (arrow added).

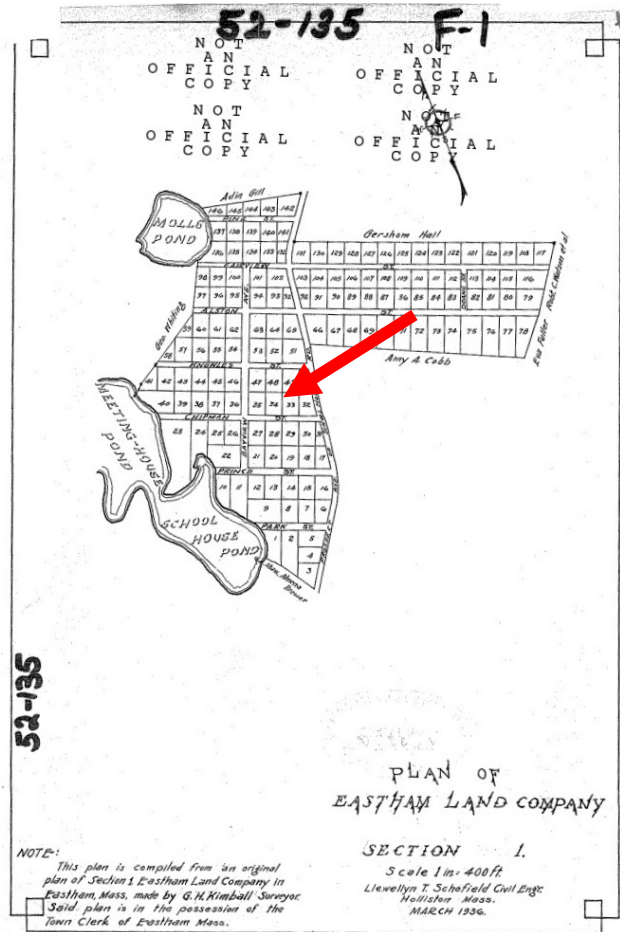


Figure 3. Plan of Eastham Land Company, Section I (arrow to Lot 34 added).



Photo 4. Detail of 1952 USGS aerial survey (arrow to future site of 30 Chipman Street added).